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VI SAFETY— Through Good Management

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U.S. Department
of Agriculture
Cooperating With the
National Safety Council



FARM SAFETY— Through Good Management

ACCIDENTS cost money—in property damage, in medical care, in lost time. As a farm business operator it's important to consider how much accidents can cost your business.

Some accidents cause only property damage. Others mean pain, suffering, crippling, or even death. Preventing accidents requires your personal concern for the well-being of the people who work on your farm.

Safety management is as important to your farm operation as production management. As the manager of your farm you are responsible for its safety, whether you work alone, are assisted by family members, or hire employees. Insurance does not change your responsibility to run a safe operation.

Time is money when it comes to farm safety. An accident on your farm may result in high medical bills, but it can cost thousands of dollars more if it delays planting or harvesting a crop. Missed marketing opportunities are cash losses. Time lost from work because of an accident can cause a serious strain on your business, and productivity of injured workers is lowered during recuperation.

An accident affects employee morale. Even a series of minor incidents can create discontent and greatly reduce employee output, especially among temporary or seasonal workers who may not feel loyal to your operation.



What is your job as “safety manager?”

First, set up a plan of action. Consider the kinds of hazards common to your farming operation. Think about the abilities or limitations of the people doing the work.

Look for unsafe conditions. Workers may call attention to a faulty mechanism, a loose guard, or a dangerous situation. Correct hazards promptly.

Watch for unsafe practices that can lead to accidents. Make sure workers understand what they are doing and the reasons for following the safety procedures you set up. Expect and insist that they follow the rules. Even the best plans require the cooperation of every worker every day.

Safety management includes getting your equipment ready for the planting or harvest season. Routine inspections can keep an accident from happening.

Follow your own rules; set an example for your workers.

Keep posted on new developments in farm and ranch safety and accident prevention. Watch for and participate in short courses on safety subjects such as: handling and applying farm chemicals, proper tractor and machinery operation, handling livestock. Watch farm magazines for articles on safety. Post clippings for others to see. Safety education is a never-ending job for the farm or ranch manager.



As safety manager on your farm . . .

1. **Make** accident prevention a management goal.
2. **Keep informed** about safety.
3. **Inspect** all equipment and facilities routinely for hazards, then correct them.
4. **See** that equipment is in good working order and that all safety shields are in place before starting a job.
5. **Train** your family and employees in safe habits. Study worker methods and correct unsafe practices before they cause casualties.
6. **Keep in shape** physically and mentally to deal safely with the normal hazards of the day's work.
7. **Know and comply** with local, state, and federal safety and health requirements that apply to your farming operation.
8. **Protect** children, the elderly, the handicapped, and farm visitors.
9. **Be prepared** for any emergency—medical, accident, fire, and weather.

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